



# IMPACT OF E-LEARNING TOOLS ON YOUNG MINDS

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## ABSTRACT

In this Technological Era 'E' is gaining too much importance—Email, E-health, E-learning, E-governance, E-marketing, E-commerce and so on. But, Are we losing somewhere Human Touch??? Here comes a big question mark. Recently, Tim Cook, CEO of Apple visited India, has some advice for parents: limit the screen time for children. He says: "kids are born digital, they're digital kids now. And it is, I think, important to set some hard rules around it."

Various surveys of Indian children show alarming findings. A Saurashtra University survey of more than a thousand children and their parents in Rajkot finds that 92% students prefer playing mobile games over playing outside and 78% students are habitual to having their phone while having meals. Digital gadgets are intoxicating childhood. We all know how important outdoor games are for physical, social, emotional, moral, mental development. E-learning is pushing them towards solitary confinement in their room along with gadgets. And it's not producing smarter next generation.

Authors are not against technology. Excess of exposure and too much dependency on these gadgets is bad for behavioural, psycho-socio and emotional development. It affects their holistic development. Very young children learn to swipe, scroll and click before they learn to speak or walk.

Children urgently need adult cooperation and help in fighting digital addiction. Because the neurochemistry of excessive smartphone usage is same as that of narcotic drugs.

**KEYWORDS:** E-learning, digital kids, holistic development.

## INTRODUCTION

Post COVID Era has changed the education and learning process. Online education and examination system opened door of digital learning.

The integration of 5G network connectivity lifted the education sector to another level. Education sector benefitted the most as it gives better connectivity and change the learning paradigm of students and enable teachers to use the latest technology supported pedagogical tools ensuring better learning outcome. It boosted the Ed-Tech brands to shape and support learning methods with enriched digital learning solutions like virtual classrooms, interactive display, digital boards, digital language lab, digital content and many more that support the learning process. EdTech created student-friendly environment and made education accessible to all (Rashmi SANZGIRI, 2023).

The teaching approach today has gone beyond the blackboard and chalk. Teachers are upgrading and adopting unique pedagogical methods to suit the current needs of young learners. They are constantly exploring new teaching techniques to make learning more interesting and fun for children. Innovative pedagogical techniques play important role in instilling deep knowledge and skills and make students better learners. The educational system should empower learners with skills to cope with constantly changing landscape. Teachers emphasize 'individual need-based learning' or personalized learning, as it helps them to learn according to their pace and on the basis of individual strengths and weaknesses. Games based teaching learning has become popular method in schools. Gamification keeps them hooked to the topic, until they learn. Gamification changed the face of learning rather it revolutionised the way children learn and engage with educational content. It made learning more fun and interactive and also supports cognitive development. Learners learn better with blend of audio-visual methods.

There is a darker side of this too. When researchers interviewed 30 parents the results were eye opener. Almost all the parents (97%) complained of increase in screen time of young children. Statistics show that kids spend between 5 and 8 hours a day online -that's up to 2950 hours a year. Whenever parents insist children to return their smartphones and gadgets young kids show aggressive behaviour and become restless. Parents said that e-learning is not making a smart generation but a generation that lacks in social behaviour patterns. Social behaviour is something that is learned when kids interact with peer mates and family, visits them, engage with friends, cooperates and show empathetic and sympathetic behaviour. Few parents (48%) were of the view that its impacting emotional health of the young children. Most of the parents (77%) of young kids said that children keep their gadgets locked and doesn't reveal whom they interacts with. Its detaching them from reality. They are getting addicted to their mobiles. Kids are learning to scroll, swipe and click before they learn to talk. It has been observed that speech development is being delayed due to excessive use of mobiles by children. And parents are also at fault because whenever child

demands attention, parents handover their mobiles to keep the young kids engrossed and busy with it. Parents' interaction with children is decreasing and its affecting their speech articulation and language development. When we interacted with physician they highlighted how excess of mobiles viewing and little interaction between caregiver and babies during babbling stage is delaying their language development.

Some parents informed researchers that keeping in view the side effects of excessive exposure to gadgets they had started limiting the screen time of their young children though they are facing lots of resistance from children.

According to McAfee's Global Connected Family Study release last year, smartphone use among Indian children aged 10-14 was 83% which was 7% above the international average of 76%.

Some disturbing facts were revealed in recently concluded study in over 40 countries conducted by US-based non-profit Sapient Labs. The study, "Age of smartphones and mental wellbeing outcome" gathered data of 27,969 young adults from 40 countries including around 4000 from India. Result revealed that getting phone early means more mental health problems as an adult, particularly suicidal thoughts, feeling of aggression towards others and sense of being detached from reality; altogether a poorer sense of 'Social Self'.

Recently Sudha Murthy well known personality, philanthropist, engineer, creative writer and co-owner of IT company Infosys in one of her Instagram message mentioned that she is thankful to God for she delivered two children in the 80s before gadgets came, if it would have been now, she does not know how she would have handled it. Similar views were expressed by who Tim Cook, CEO of Apple visited India in April 2023, has some advice for parents: limit the screen time for children. He says: "kids are born digital, they're digital kids now. And it is, I think, important to set some hard rules around it." This reflects how the IT giants feel about the overuse of gadgets by children. They too feel helpless and are concerned about socio-emotional health of young children.

U.S. surgeon general Dr. Vivek H. Murthy while speaking during the United States Conference of Mayors 91st winter meeting on 18 January, 2023 warns that minimum user age of 13 is too early for kids to be on social media, describing the age as a time when kids are developing their identity, their sense of self. He further said that parents should create family media plans, establish tech-free zones and encourage children to foster in-person friendships.

It is suggested that measures should be taken to make libraries more attractive and friendly for young children. Parents must visit libraries with their young children, this will inculcate habit of library visits among them. Rather than handing over mobile or other gadgets parents should read books to them. Book reading could be developed in child as young as three months old. Parents must avoid



using gadgets as pacifiers. Learning by watching e-contents, e-learning, E-pathshala or MOOC can supplement learning, however cannot replace classroom learning. Young minds learn more by doing themselves with their hands. Experiential learning plays an important role. E-Learning lacks in kinesthetic learning. Kinesthetic learning that requires learner to touch, feel and moving around study materials to understand, it is effective method of learning for young children. It enhances learning process.

Entire learning must not depend upon technology but in order to give best benefit it should be blended with regular and traditional learning methods. Dealing with Cyber security is also one of the challenges which should be monitored rigorously to create a safe digital future for next generation digital kids.

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